Summary of
"Forming an Effective Supportive Housing Consortium"
Proscio, Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2000
Summary Prepared by Michael Stephens, March 9, 2006

I. Summary

This paper advocates the creation of a consortium of local funders and government agencies, service organizations, and housing developers to oversee the supportive housing program for a community. It is based on experience with a Supportive Housing Demonstration Program conducted in Michigan starting in 1996.

Emphasis is given to the importance of cooperation and understanding between housing developers and service providers. The thought is for these groups to get to know each other's business by cooperating in the development of supportive housing projects. Formal activities to encourage this kind of understanding can be planned, such as tours or briefings.

The author suggests the consortium engages in the following activities:
- Pick target groups of tenants based on available or feasible funding, "whose needs might be most effectively met by combining services and housing into an integrated package". This may entail a "needs assessment, which is usually the responsibility of the Continuum-of-Care process.
- Gauge usefulness and market potential of sites, break down barriers to success in those sites, and select the opportunities that best meet the identified needs (at a reasonable cost).
- Determine the information needed by stakeholders in the project and how that information can be supplied.
- Build a base of funding and public support.
- Create a services committee to develop a budget for on-site services based on realistic assumptions about what funding could conceivably be raised and what services are essential to integrate into the program.
- Create a housing committee to consider acquisition, construction, or renovation of housing and to develop a budget for the development and management of the building(s).
- Full consortium approves projects based on "hypothetical budgets", and committees move on to develop actual budgets for feasibility analysis.

Once a project is deemed feasible, a developer/service provider partnership can be selected to carry out the project. The consortium may continue to provide support by way of advocacy, fundraising, and helping solve problems that come up. The authors stress the importance of the consortium's responsibility to make sure the developer and service provider comply with the terms under which the funds were raised and allocated.

III. Recommendations